



## CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

# Facts About... Ecosystem Restoration

**T**he CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and the public to ensure a healthy ecosystem, reliable water supplies, good quality water, and stable levees in California's Bay-Delta system and its tributaries. These four priorities represent the CALFED Bay-Delta Common Programs.

### The Problem

The California Bay-Delta ecosystem continues to deteriorate. It no longer provides the habitat necessary to enable native fish, wildlife, and plants to flourish.

The Bay-Delta system is home to plants and animals found nowhere else on the planet. Millions of birds migrate through and live in the Bay-Delta, as do more than 53 species of fish, including one of the most productive natural salmon fisheries on the west coast. However, since the early 1800s, 700,000 acres of land naturally serving as water overflow areas and seasonal habitat have been converted to agricultural and urban uses. Other practices such as hydraulic mining and modern water project operations have also contributed to habitat loss and decline. Without ecosystem restoration, native and valuable plant and animal populations will continue to be at risk.

### The Goal

To restore ecosystem functions (all of the qualities of a natural environment that enable fish, wildlife, and plants to flourish) for the benefit of all the important species that rely on the Delta's freshwater, brackish tidal marsh, shallow water, riparian woodland, or shaded waterway environments.

### Ways This Can Be Accomplished

The Ecosystem Restoration Common Program aims to take advantage of natural processes whenever possible to achieve its goals. For example, efforts are proposed to maintain or re-establish "meander zones" upstream of the Delta, where tributaries can flow within their natural channels. It also seeks to restore some of the ecosystem's natural resilience, in part by protecting different habitat types so that species can adapt to changing conditions. Restoration activities that benefit several species and contribute to achieving other program goals (water quality, levee stability, and water supply reliability) will be given priority.

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Phase I of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program identified several additional implementation measures to help restore ecosystems. Examples include:

- Protecting, enhancing and restoring shallow water tidal habitat; riparian habitat; riverine habitat; and habitats along floodways.
- Developing additional water for environmental use and/or acquiring it from willing sellers.
- Improving habitats by providing incentives to encourage environmentally friendly agricultural practices; improving coordination among government regulatory agencies; and making it easier to secure permits for habitat restoration projects.
- Reversing subsidence of Delta islands, some of which have dropped in elevation to as much as 18 feet below sea level, by implementing measures like restoring wetlands to halt the loss of peat soil.
- Controlling introduced species that can endanger Delta species by degrading ecosystem functions, and reduce the probability of additional introductions.
- Installing more and better fish screens to keep fish in their natural habitat and migration routes rather than being lost in water diversions.
- Improve protection and management of fish populations by incorporating more monitoring of the size, movement and location of fish populations.
- Acquire land or water for ecosystem improvements, and do so only from willing sellers.

## What You've Told Us

Through public meetings and comment, Californians have told the CALFED Bay-Delta Program several important things about the Ecosystem Restoration Common Program, including:

- Existing high-quality habitat should be protected and managed before it is lost to further degradation.
- Where habitats have already been lost, they should be restored to the degree necessary to ensure a healthy, functioning ecosystem.

## Want To Know More?

For further information on how you can participate in the effort to restore the environment and water management of the California Bay-Delta system, contact: CALFED, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814 ph: (916) 657-2666 Fax: (916) 654-9780 Public Information Line 1-800-700-5752, Website: <http://calfed.ca.gov>

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